



Education Initiative

WHAT PARENTS, STUDENTS AND TEACHERS THINK ABOUT STANDARDS, TESTS, ACCOUNTABILITY ... AND MORE

Updated November 2000 from a May 2000 Document



TABLE OF CONTENTS

▶ WHAT PARENTS THINK ...

Improving Schools Is Top Priority	1
Parents Support Higher Standards	2
Parents and the Public Support Testing	4
Americans See Many Benefits of Testing	7
Parents Don't Think There's Too Much Testing	7
But Parents and the Public Also Favor Other Measures	8
What Parents Mean by High Academic Priorities	10
But Standards Aren't Necessarily a Top Priority	11
Parents Support Stronger Accountability Measures	11
Parents Are Concerned About "Too Much Pressure"	12
Parents Don't Know Very Much About Schools	12
Parents Have Traditional Views on Involvement	13
Parents Have Mixed Views on Homework	13
Parents Are Losing Confidence	14
But They Still Value the High School Diploma and Local Schools	14
Parents See College Diploma as the "New Essential"	15
Parents Rely on Teachers for Credible Information	15
The Public Respects Teachers Most of All	16
The Public Describes Children in Negative Terms	16
But Most Americans Believe Even the Most Troubled Children Can Be Reached	16

▶ WHAT STUDENTS THINK ...

Students Support Higher Standards and Tougher Tests	17
Students Favor the Same Standards for All	18
Two-Thirds Support Tests in Chicago	19
Students Are Bored in Class	19
Students Might Be Benefitting From Grade Inflation	20
Students Are Motivated by College and Jobs	20
Students Like Their Schools	21
Students Feel Very Stressed	21
But Have Positive Attitudes	22
Students Rely on Their Parents	23
Students Positive About Employers' Asking for Transcripts	23

▶ WHAT TEACHERS THINK ...

Teachers Support Higher Standards	25
Feeling Positive in Washington State	27
Standards Should Apply to All Students	27
Tests Will Hold Students, Schools and Teachers Accountable	28
Tests Are Reasonable	29
But Tests Are Narrowing the Curriculum	30
And Only 15 Percent Say Test Scores are a Very Important Indicator	30
Teachers Favor Work Samples Over Test Scores	31
Academic Standards Are Not a High Priority	31
Standards Haven't Changed Teachers' Practice	32
Resources	32

WHAT PARENTS* THINK ...

▶ IMPROVING SCHOOLS IS TOP PRIORITY

Percent of public saying these issues are “extremely important” when voting for U.S. president and Congress

IMPROVING EDUCATION	61%
PROTECTING SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE	56%
ENCOURAGING TRADITIONAL MORAL VALUES AND STANDARDS	48%
PROTECTING PATIENTS’ HEALTHCARE RIGHTS	47%
PROVIDING HEALTH CARE COVERAGE	42%

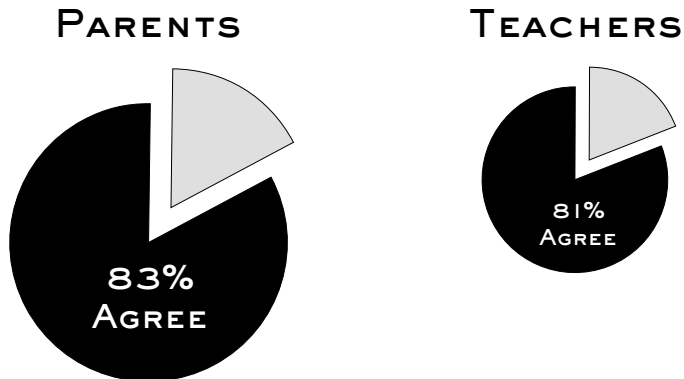
- Men and women have similar views on education reform.
- Improving education is the top issue in all regions, especially the West.
- Improving education is especially important among women ages 18 to 34.

Source: American Viewpoint, April 2000

**Note: Where possible, we used data on parents. In some cases, data was available only for “the public.” We labeled that information accordingly.*

▶ PARENTS SUPPORT HIGHER STANDARDS

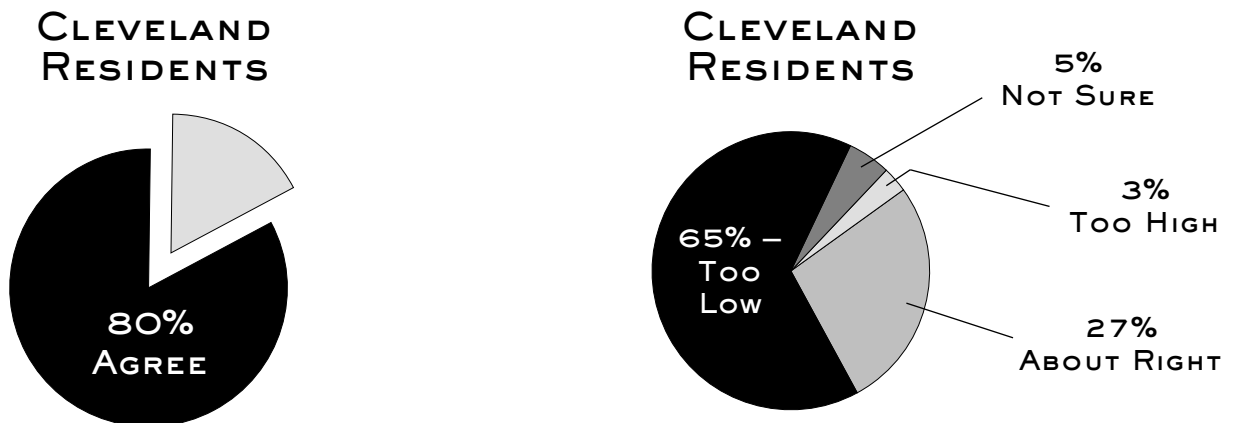
Having guidelines for what students should know and be able to do will improve performance.



Source: Reality Check 2000, Public Agenda

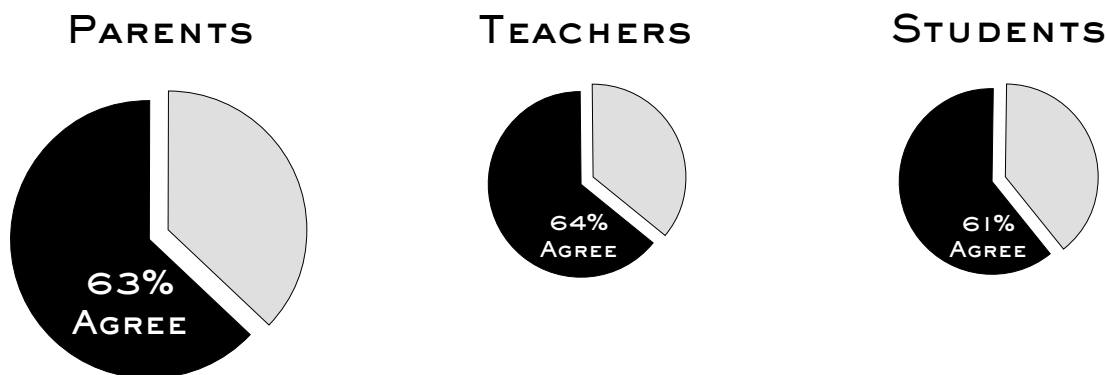
If schools set higher standards, students would learn more.

Are standards high enough?



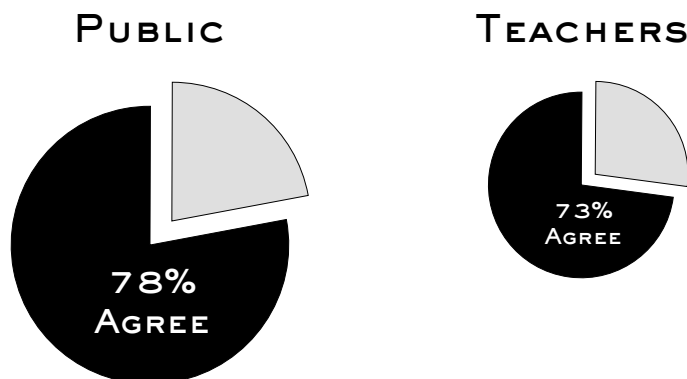
Source: Triad Research Group, August 1998

Inner-city youngsters should be expected to reach the same standards as children from more affluent backgrounds.



Source: Reality Check 2000, Public Agenda

Would you favor requiring high school students to take a standardized core curriculum of certain courses?



Source: Phi Delta Kappa Poll of Teacher Attitudes, 2000

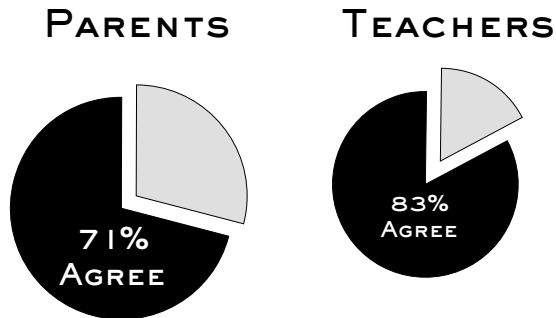
“On the right track” in Washington state::

Eighty-seven percent of parents support the statewide effort to raise standards in Washington state; two-thirds “strongly support” this effort. Seventy-three percent believe the effort to focus on reading, writing and math is on the “right track.” Only 19 percent believe it’s putting too much pressure on teachers and students.

Source: Partnership for Learning, April 2000

PARENTS AND THE PUBLIC SUPPORT TESTING

By holding them accountable for results, high-stakes tests will force schools, students and teachers to work harder. Agree?



Source: Reality Check 2000, Public Agenda

Do you think students should or should not have to pass statewide tests before they graduate from high school, even if they have passing grades in their classes?

Should have to pass graduation test:

GENERAL PUBLIC	70%
PARENTS	65%

Should have to pass graduation test if retake is possible:

GENERAL PUBLIC	81%
PARENTS	76%

Source: BRT, August 2000

Should fourth- and fifth-grade students have to pass tests in English and math in order to be promoted to the next grade, even if they have passing grades?

Should have to pass promotion test:

GENERAL PUBLIC	76%
PARENTS	73%

Should have to pass promotion test if summer school is provided and retake is possible:

GENERAL PUBLIC	87%
PARENTS	81%

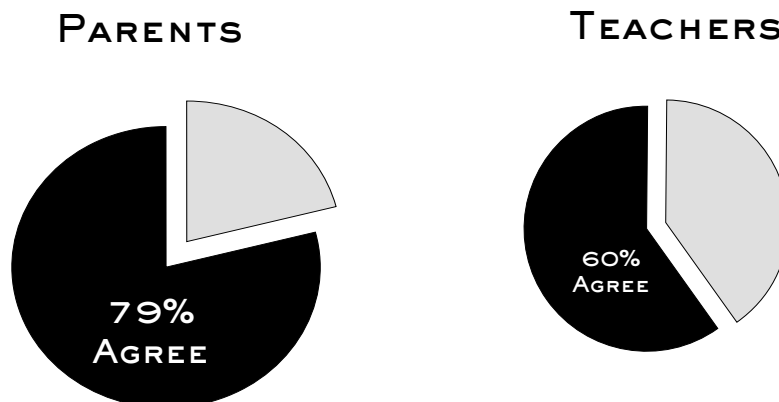
Source: BRT, August 2000

Students pay more attention and study harder if they know they must pass a test to get promoted or to graduate. Agree?

STRONGLY AGREE	54%	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	14%
SOMEWHAT AGREE	21%	STRONGLY DISAGREE	9%

Source: Public Agenda, October 2000

Do you support the idea that students should pass a test to be promoted to the next grade? If they fail to pass, they go to summer school or repeat the grade.



Source: Reality Check 2000, Public Agenda

Some school districts now require students to meet higher academic standards in order to be promoted or to graduate. If they can't meet the higher standards, they have to go to summer school to catch up. Would you approve or oppose having your own school district adopt this policy?

Now suppose your school decided that your child was among the students who should go to summer school in order to catch up. Do you think you would approve or oppose the decision?

STRONGLY APPROVE	60%
SOMEWHAT APPROVE	21%
SOMEWHAT OPPOSE	6%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	9%

STRONGLY APPROVE	66%
SOMEWHAT APPROVE	19%
SOMEWHAT OPPOSE	5%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	8%

Source: Public Agenda, October 2000

Now suppose your child finished summer school but still failed to meet the academic standards. Do you think you would approve or oppose holding him or her back a grade?

STRONGLY APPROVE	46%
SOMEWHAT APPROVE	21%

SOMEWHAT OPPOSE	11%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	16%

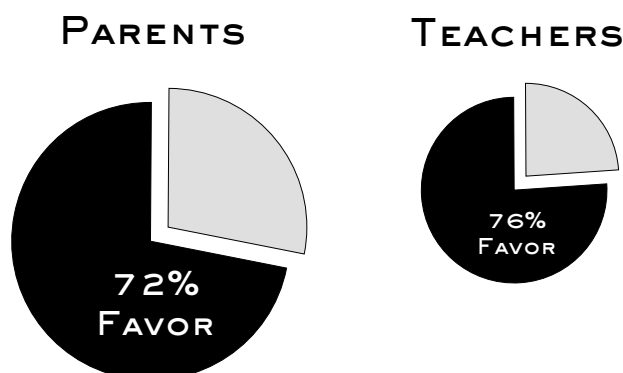
Source: Public Agenda, October 2000

Before students are awarded a high school diploma, would you want your school district to require students to:

PASS A BASIC SKILLS TEST IN READING, WRITING AND MATH	54%
PASS A MORE CHALLENGING TEST SHOWING THEY HAVE LEARNED AT HIGHER LEVELS	21%
REQUIRING KIDS TO PASS A TEST IS A BAD IDEA	14%

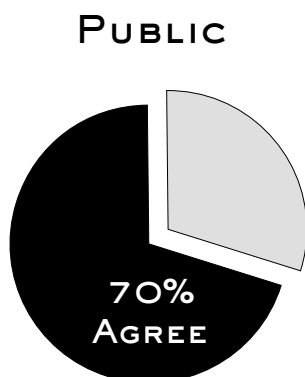
Source: Public Agenda, October 2000

Would you favor stricter standards for social promotion in school even if it meant that significantly more students would be held back?



Source: Phi Delta Kappa Poll of Teacher Attitudes, 2000

Should students have to pass an exit exam to graduate?



Source: Mass Insight Education Research, April 2000

Do you favor testing as a graduation requirement, even if 25 percent of students fail the first time?

TOTAL	70%
BOSTON	71%
SUBURBS	68%
PUBLIC SCHOOL PARENTS	69%

Source: Mass Insight Education Research, April 2000

Do you support Washington state's 10th-grade graduation exam in reading, writing, listening and math?

PARENTS	
STRONGLY SUPPORT	66%
SUPPORT	19%

Source: Partnership for Learning, April 2000

▶ AMERICANS SEE MANY BENEFITS OF TESTING

Tests are a good idea because:

	PARENTS AGREE	PUBLIC AGREES
THEY ARE VERY USEFUL FOR SCHOOLS TO EVALUATE TEACHER PERFORMANCE	85%	85%
THEY ARE VERY USEFUL FOR PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY TO EVALUATE SCHOOLS	83%	83%
THEY ARE VERY HELPFUL FOR PARENTS TO SEE HOW WELL THEIR OWN CHILDREN ARE DOING	76%	79%
THEY ARE VERY USEFUL TO EVALUATE HOW WELL TEACHERS ARE PERFORMING	75%	76%
THEY MEASURE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NEEDED IN COLLEGE	64%	69%
THEY MAKE STUDENTS WORK HARDER	64%	69%
THEY MEASURE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NEEDED FOR JOBS	62%	63%

Source: BRT, August 2000

▶ PARENTS DON'T THINK THERE'S TOO MUCH TESTING

Amount of standardized testing in high school:

	TOO MUCH	ABOUT RIGHT	NOT ENOUGH
TOTAL	9%	44%	32%
PUBLIC SCHOOL FATHERS	5%	41%	41%
PUBLIC SCHOOL MOTHERS	14%	54%	23%
WHITES	9%	42%	31%
BLACKS	11%	53%	26%
HISPANICS	5%	39%	42%
URBAN	10%	50%	23%
SUBURBAN	7%	41%	37%
RURAL	14%	41%	31%

Source: BRT, August 2000

Thinking about standardized tests, would you say that your child is required to take too many of them, too few, are things about right, or don't you know?

TOO MANY	11%
TOO FEW	9%
ABOUT RIGHT	55%
DON'T KNOW	25%

Source: Public Agenda, October 2000

Do you think the teachers in your school focus so much on preparing for standardized tests that real learning is neglected; is this not really a problem at your school; or don't you know?

FOCUS SO MUCH ON PREPARING THAT REAL LEARNING IS NEGLECTED	18%
NOT REALLY A PROBLEM	51%
DON'T KNOW	25%

BUT PARENTS AND THE PUBLIC ALSO FAVOR OTHER MEASURES

It's wrong to use the results of just one test to decide whether a student gets promoted or graduates. Do you agree?

STRONGLY AGREE	61%
SOMEWHAT AGREE	17%
SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	8%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	12%

Source: Public Agenda, October 2000

It's not fair to put so much on one test.

	PARENTS
STRONGLY AGREE	50%
SOMEWHAT AGREE	26%

Source: Reality Check 2000, Public Agenda

Most helpful factors for high school graduation:

	PARENTS	PUBLIC
GRADES	86%	88%
ATTENDANCE	64%	66%
TEACHER RECOMMENDATION	60%	67%
STATEWIDE TEST SCORES	59%	71%

Source: BRT, August 2000

Most helpful factors for elementary and middle school promotion:

	PARENTS	PUBLIC
GRADES	78%	76%
TEACHER RECOMMENDATION	70%	71%
STATEWIDE TEST SCORES	60%	65%

Source: BRT, August 2000

Most helpful factors for elementary and middle school promotion:

	PUBLIC	TEACHERS
EXAMPLES OF WORK	33%	60%
LETTER GRADES	23%	16%
SCORES ON TESTS	27%	13%
WRITTEN OBSERVATIONS	14%	11%

Source: Phi Delta Kappa Poll of Teacher Attitudes, 2000

Which provides the best picture of student progress?

	PARENTS
GRADES AND TEACHER EVALUATION	54%
GRADES, EVALUATION AND TESTS OF EQUAL VALUE	25%
STANDARDIZED TESTS	19%

Source: Los Angeles Times poll, April 2000

▶ WHAT PARENTS MEAN BY HIGH ACADEMIC STANDARDS ...

Which subjects are “absolutely essential” for graduating from high school?

	PARENTS
BASIC READING, WRITING, MATH	91%
GOOD WORK HABITS	79%
COMPUTER SKILLS	78%
U.S. HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY	61%
BIOLOGY, CHEMISTRY, PHYSICS	56%
ADVANCED MATH	38%
FOREIGN HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY	35%
CLASSICS (SHAKESPEARE, PLATO)	21%

Source: Assignment Incomplete, Public Agenda, 1995

► ... BUT STANDARDS AREN'T NECESSARILY A TOP PRIORITY

If there were one thing you could change to improve public schools in your community, what would that be?

	PUBLIC	TEACHERS
DISCIPLINE/MORE CONTROL	12%	6%
MORE TEACHERS/SMALLER CLASS SIZE	10%	12%
BETTER/MORE QUALIFIED TEACHERS	7%	0%
FUNDING	5%	8%
SECURITY	4%	0%
PRAYER/GOD BACK IN SCHOOLS	4%	0%
DRESS CODE/UNIFORMS	3%	0%
HIGHER TEACHER PAY	3%	5%
MORE PARENT INVOLVEMENT	3%	18%
ACADEMIC STANDARDS	3%	2%

Source: Phi Delta Kappa Poll of Teacher Attitudes, 2000

► PARENTS SUPPORT STRONGER ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

Percent saying proposals are a “good idea:”

	PARENTS	TEACHERS
PAY FOR PERFORMANCE	59%	22%
END PRINCIPAL TENURE	65%	29%
OVERHAUL PERSISTENTLY FAILING SCHOOLS	62%	23%

Source: Reality Check 2000, Public Agenda

▶ PARENTS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT “TOO MUCH PRESSURE”

Percent of parents saying this is too much pressure:

PARENTS WHO INSIST THEIR A-AVERAGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SPEND SUMMER VACATION TAKING ADVANCED COURSES EVEN THOUGH HE WANTS TIME OFF	87%
PARENTS WHO URGE THEIR A-AVERAGE STUDENT TO STUDY LONGER AND TAKE TOUGHER COURSES	67%
A HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL WHO ELIMINATES TEAM SPORTS TO GET KIDS TO CONCENTRATE ON ACADEMICS	47%
A HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL WHO CONSTANTLY PUSHES TEACHERS/STUDENTS TO MAINTAIN THE SCHOOL’S TOP ACADEMIC RANKING	47%

Source: Assignment Incomplete, Public Agenda, 1995

▶ PARENTS DON’T KNOW VERY MUCH ABOUT SCHOOLS

Percent of parents knowing a lot about:

CURRICULUM, ACADEMIC GOALS	49%
AVAILABILITY OF RIGOROUS COURSES	39%
SCHOOL’S RANK IN DISTRICT	34%
TEACHERS’ QUALIFICATIONS	21%
STATEWIDE COMPARISONS	18%
NATIONAL COMPARISONS	13%
INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS	3%

Source: Reality Check 2000, Public Agenda

▶ PARENTS HAVE TRADITIONAL VIEWS ON INVOLVEMENT

Percent of parents feeling very comfortable with helping ...

IN CLASS	73%
AFTER SCHOOL	53%
SET BEHAVIOR POLICY	50%
EVALUATE TEACHERS	37%
SET BUDGETS	36%
RECRUIT STAFF	31%
PLAN CURRICULUM	25%

Source: Playing Their Parts, Public Agenda, 1999

▶ PARENTS HAVE MIXED VIEWS ON HOMEWORK

Eighty-three percent believe that the most important thing parents can do is to check homework and encourage kids to learn.

But 50 percent say they've had serious arguments where there was yelling or crying over schoolwork; of those, 49 percent say they've walked away and let the child deal with the consequences of not doing their schoolwork rather than dealing with the child's constant stalling.

Source: Playing Their Parts, Public Agenda, 1999

▶ PARENTS ARE LOSING CONFIDENCE ...

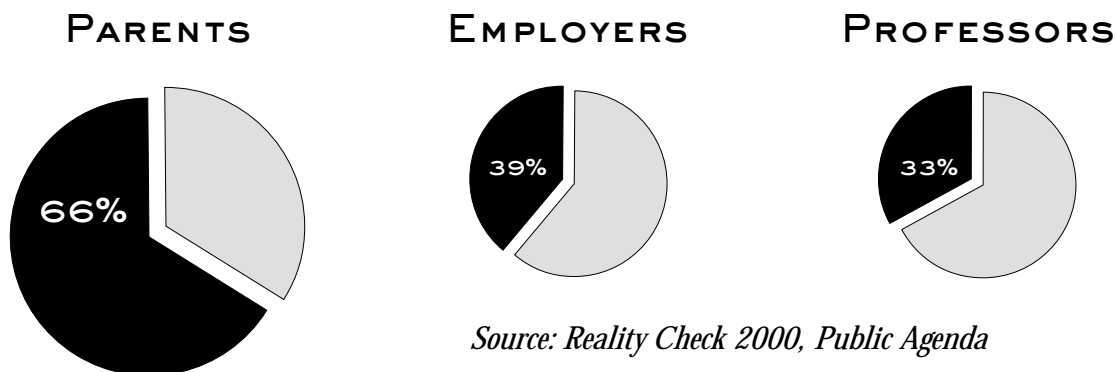
Do you favor or oppose allowing students and parents to choose a private school to attend at public expense?

	1993	1995	1997	1998
FAVOR	24%	33%	44%	44%
OPPOSE	74%	66%	52%	50%

Source: Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll, 1999

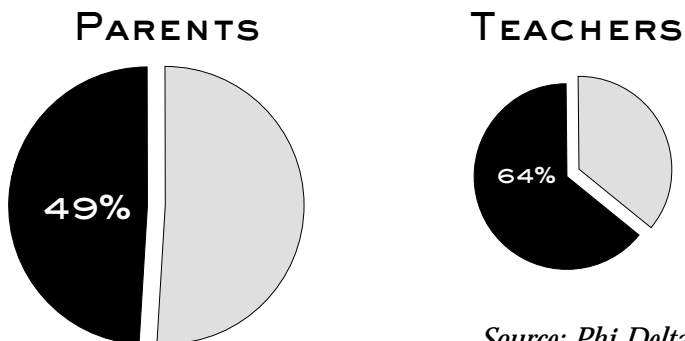
▶ ... BUT THEY STILL VALUE THE HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA AND LOCAL SCHOOLS

Percent saying the high school diploma means the student “has at least mastered the basic



Source: Reality Check 2000, Public Agenda

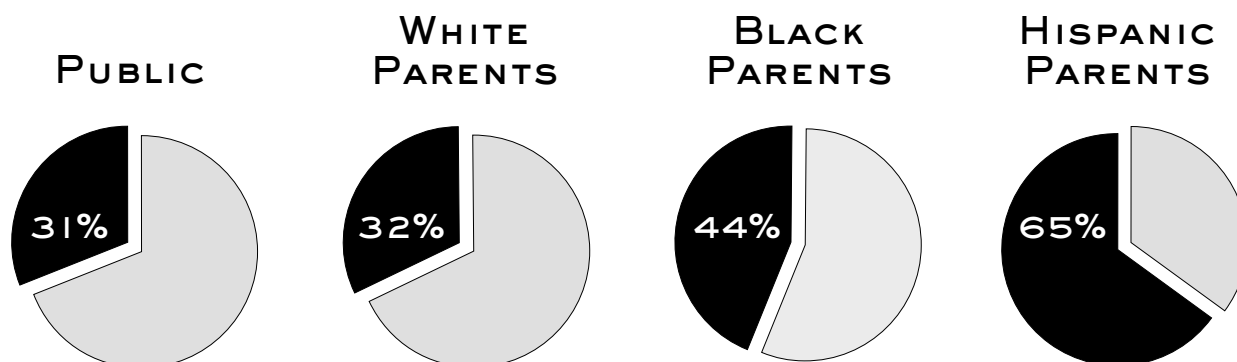
Percent giving a grade of A or B to their local schools:



Source: Phi Delta Kappa Poll of Teacher Attitudes, 2000

▶ PARENTS SEE COLLEGE DIPLOMA AS THE “NEW ESSENTIAL”

Is a college education necessary for success today? Percent saying “yes:”



Source: Great Expectations, Public Agenda, 2000

▶ PARENTS RELY ON TEACHERS FOR CREDIBLE INFORMATION

Who’s the most reliable source of information?

TEACHERS	42%
CHILDREN	18%
SCHOOL	14%
OTHER PARENTS	7%
MEDIA	2%
DISTRICT	1%

Source: Recruiting New Teachers, 1998

Americans pay “a lot of attention” to:

	PARENTS	PUBLIC
TEACHERS	62%	60%
PARENTS	59%	46%
COLLEGE ADMISSION OFFICERS	47%	38%
NATIONAL BUSINESS LEADERS	32%	30%
LOCAL EMPLOYERS	30%	29%

Source: BRT, August 2000

▶ THE PUBLIC RESPECTS TEACHERS MOST OF ALL

When asked which of eight professions they felt “provides the most important benefit to society,” the public put teachers first by more than a 3:1 margin over physicians (62 percent vs. 17 percent). When the identical question was asked in 1996, fewer people (57 percent) put teachers over physicians. In 1988, even fewer people (35 percent) cited teachers in a closely comparable poll.

When asked about a career they would recommend to a family member, people ranked teaching (39 percent) a close second to medicine (40 percent), despite the well-established differences in pay.

Another indicator of the profession’s solid public esteem is that when asked how much influence different people had on their career choices, people placed teachers (24 percent) in second place behind their parents (48 percent).

Source: Recruiting New Teachers, 1998

▶ THE PUBLIC DESCRIBES CHILDREN IN NEGATIVE TERMS

Fifty-eight percent use negative terms (such as “lazy” and “spoiled”) to describe children.

Seventy-four percent use these terms to describe teenagers.

Source: Kids These Days '99, Public Agenda

▶ BUT MOST AMERICANS BELIEVE EVEN THE MOST TROUBLED CHILDREN CAN BE REACHED

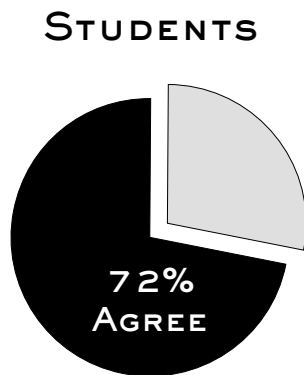
Seventy-five percent believe that, given enough help and attention, just about all kids can learn and succeed in school.

Source: Kids These Days '99, Public Agenda

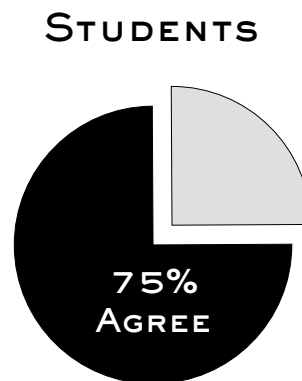
WHAT STUDENTS THINK ...

▶ STUDENTS SUPPORT HIGHER STANDARDS AND TOUGHER TESTS

Higher standards will help most kids pay more attention and learn more.

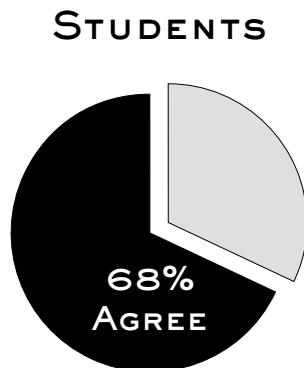


Schools should pass students to the next grade only when they've learned what's expected of them.

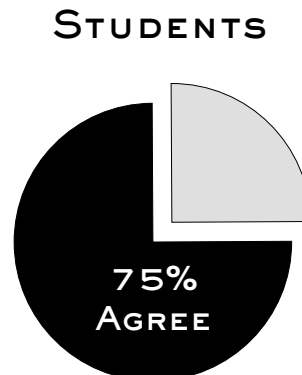


Source: Getting By, Public Agenda, 1997

Knowing you would have to pass a test to graduate would make you work harder.



Kids would learn more if they had to pass a test to graduate.

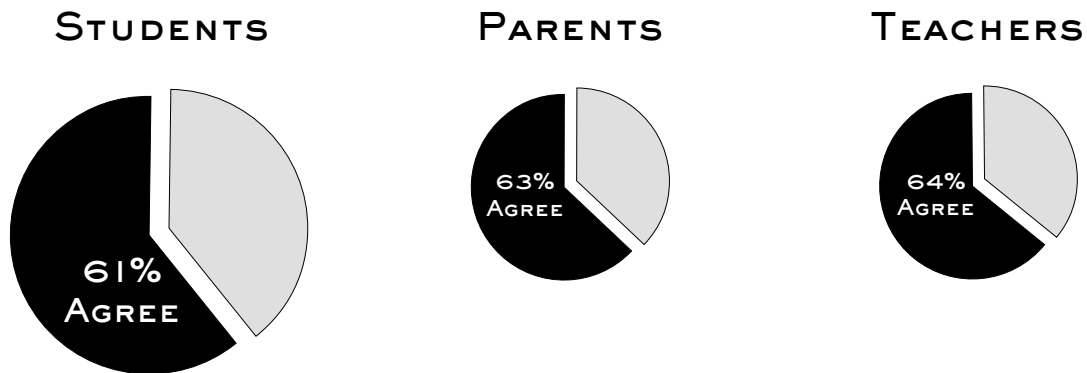


Source: Reality Check '99, Public Agenda



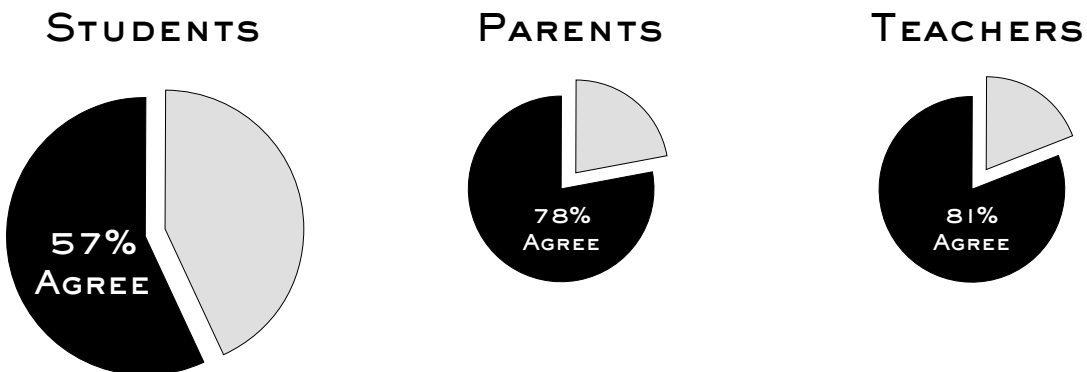
STUDENTS FAVOR THE SAME STANDARDS FOR ALL

Inner-city youngsters should be expected to reach the same standards as children from more affluent backgrounds.



Source: Reality Check 2000, Public Agenda

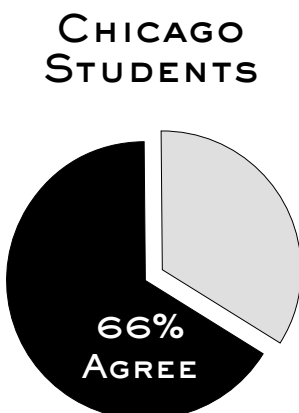
It is worse for a child who is struggling in school to be passed on to the next grade and be expected to keep up than it is to repeat a grade.



Source: Reality Check 2000, Public Agenda

▶ TWO-THIRDS SUPPORT TESTS IN CHICAGO

Students should be tested in reading math and writing as frequently as they are now: third, fifth, eighth and 10th grade.



Source: Nonscientific sampling by the Chicago Sun-Times, 2000

University of Chicago researcher Melissa Roderick, who has surveyed numerous city students as codirector of the Consortium on Chicago School Research, was not surprised by the results. It jibes with surveys she's done of Chicago public school students, she said. "Are standards good? Kids say 'yeah,'" Roderick said. "Whether we like it or not, and whether we think that the kind of learning kids get from prepping for tests is good, it's very clear when you talk to kids that kids like goals Kids want challenges, goals, structure and feedback, and that's what they think tests give them."

▶ STUDENTS ARE BORED IN CLASS

Percent of college freshmen who frequently feel "bored in class:"

1999	40%
1998	38%
1985	26%

Source: UCLA freshmen survey, fall 1999

► STUDENTS MIGHT BE BENEFITTING FROM GRADE INFLATION

Percent of college freshmen who say they finished high school with:

	A AVERAGE	C AVERAGE
1999	34%	12%
1998	32%	13%
1969	13%	33%

Source: UCLA freshmen survey, fall 1999

► STUDENTS ARE MOTIVATED BY COLLEGE AND JOBS

Percent of students saying these things would motivate them a lot:

GETTING INTO A GOOD COLLEGE	85%
GETTING A COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP	85%
HAVING TO SHOW A TRANSCRIPT TO GET A JOB	77%
FEAR OF BEING LEFT BACK	74%
PERSONAL SATISFACTION	69%
AVOIDING SUMMER SCHOOL	68%
PLEASING PARENTS	68%
GETTING PAID FOR BETTER GRADES	62%
LOSING SPORTS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES	59%
MAKING TEACHERS PROUD	44%

Source: Reality Check 2000, Public Agenda

► STUDENTS LIKE THEIR SCHOOLS

Percent of students giving their local schools an A or B grade for:

OVERALL	66%
TEACHING BASIC ACADEMIC SUBJECTS	90%
AVAILABILITY OF COMPUTERS	79%
AVAILABILITY OF CLASSES LIKE ART, MUSIC, THEATER	79%
GIVING HELP/ADVICE ABOUT COLLEGE	78%

Source: The Shell Poll, summer 1999

► STUDENTS FEEL VERY STRESSED ...

Percent of teenagers saying they feel “this form of pressure the most:”

TO GET GOOD GRADES	44%
TO GET INTO COLLEGE	32%
TO FIT IN SOCIALLY	29%
TO USE DRUGS AND ALCOHOL	19%
TO BE SEXUALLY ACTIVE	13%

Source: The Shell Poll, summer 1999

Percent of college freshmen who feel “frequently overwhelmed by all I have to do:”

1999	30%
1998	30%
1985	16%

Source: UCLA freshmen survey, fall 1999

► ... BUT HAVE POSITIVE ATTITUDES

Percent of teenagers saying views are “very close” to how they feel:

I CAN ALWAYS TRUST MY PARENTS TO BE THERE WHEN I NEED THEM	72%
THERE IS SOMEONE OTHER THAN MY PARENTS I CAN GO TO	67%
FAITH IN GOD IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF MY LIFE	66%
I CAN TRUST MY FRIENDS TO BE THERE WHEN I NEED THEM	61%
I AM USUALLY HAPPY	50%

Source: Kids These Days '99, Public Agenda

Percent of teenagers saying they feel this way “most” or “some” of the time:

HAPPY	93%
CARED ABOUT	91%
CONFIDENT	90%
MOTIVATED	86%
FORTUNATE	84%
BORED	57%
WORRIED	48%
ANGRY	37%
DEPRESSED	24%
LONELY	23%

Source: Reality Check 2000, Public Agenda

► STUDENTS RELY ON THEIR PARENTS

Percent saying they rely on the following “a lot” or “a fair amount” for support and guidance:

PARENTS	79%
FRIENDS	75%
GIRLFRIEND/BOYFRIEND	51%
SIBLINGS	48%
TEACHERS	41%
PRIEST/RABBI/MINISTER	37%
GUIDANCE COUNSELOR	31%

Source: The Shell Poll, summer 1999

► STUDENTS POSITIVE ABOUT EMPLOYERS’ ASKING FOR TRANSCRIPTS

The following quotations are from Maryland students after they talked with employers about the importance of doing well in school.

- “The speaker helped me think about my future, and I realized that I honestly had no idea. As he talked, I got more ideas about what I want to do.”
- “I learned that I need to shape up. I need to do better in school.”
- “He was cool about it ... he had our class early in the morning, and we stayed awake! ... he interacted with us and understood our point of view ... we listened to him.”
- “I didn’t even know what a transcript was before you told us.”

- “Young adults are not always sure what will happen to them when they leave high school. This presentation will give them a better understanding as to what to do in life.”
- “With the ideas you told me, I might be able to look at an obstacle and get through it with an easy smile.”
- “I now know that I have to start deciding where my life is going.”
- “I was always told that I had to do well in school, but I never really took it seriously. I just thought there were a lot of options open for me even if I did poorly in high school, but I now know it isn’t like that.”
- “It is one of those things you have always known, but you don’t think about until someone points it out.”
- “I’m an average B-C student, but I can get A’s. My mom is always telling me I could get straight A’s if I applied myself. Maybe I should listen to her.”
- “I need to stop slackin’ off in school ... last year I slacked off majorly ... the actions I make now dictate my future.”
- “The future is only determined by me, and it is in my hands.”
- “I learned if I work my hardest, I can achieve my goals even if my grades aren’t straight A’s.”
- “The most important thing I learned today is that I may not be able to change the whole world, but I can certainly change my world, and I can change it starting today.”

Source: Achievement Counts, Maryland Business Roundtable for Education

WHAT TEACHERS THINK ...

► TEACHERS SUPPORT HIGHER STANDARDS

Percent of teachers who favor “a new approach to education, focused on raising academic standards.”

STRONGLY FAVOR	32%
SOMEWHAT FAVOR	41%
SOMEWHAT OPPOSE	13%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	6%
NOT SURE	8%

Source: American Federation of Teachers survey, fall 1999

Percent of teachers saying the standards program has had “a positive effect” on their own school:

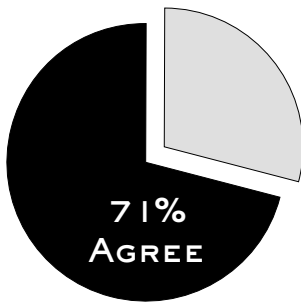
VERY POSITIVE	17%
SOMEWHAT POSITIVE	50%
NEUTRAL	16%
SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE	13%
VERY NEGATIVE	2%
NOT SURE	2%

Source: American Federation of Teachers survey, fall 1999

The standards program has helped to better focus the attention of administrators and faculty on the core mission of educating students.

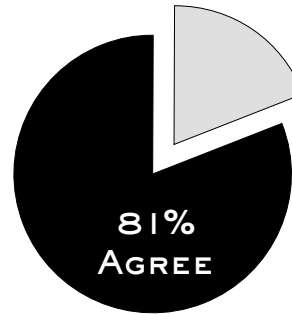
Having guidelines for what students should know and be able to do will improve performance.

TEACHERS



Source: American Federation of Teachers survey, fall 1999

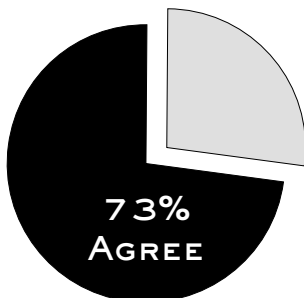
TEACHERS



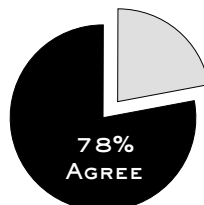
Source: Reality Check '99, Public Agenda

Would you favor requiring high school students to take a standardized core curriculum of certain courses?

TEACHERS



PUBLIC



Source: Phi Delta Kappa Poll of Teacher Attitudes, 2000

► FEELING POSITIVE IN WASHINGTON STATE

Seventy percent of teachers in Washington state think the efforts to raise academic standards are having a positive influence.

Seventy-five percent think it's important to achieve the knowledge and skills measured by the test.

Seventy-one percent believe schools should be more accountable for ensuring students are learning.

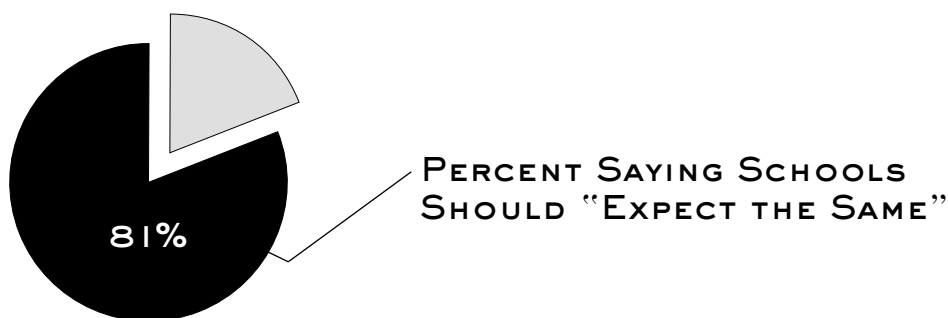
Seventy-two percent support the new 10th-grade test in reading, writing, listening and math as a graduation requirement.

Eighty-eight percent are confident they can help most students meet the standards.

Source: Partnership for Learning, April 2000

► STANDARDS SHOULD APPLY TO ALL STUDENTS

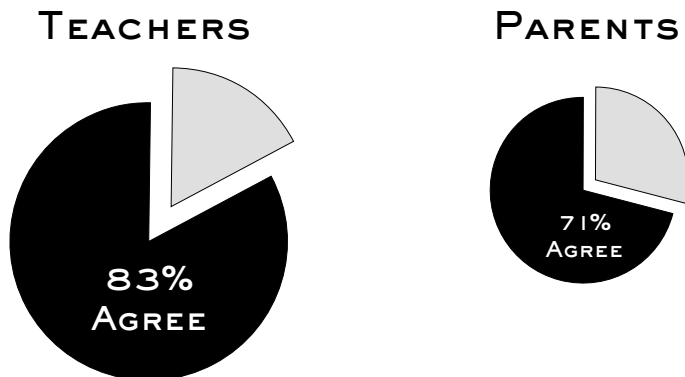
Should public schools expect inner-city kids to achieve academic standards that are as high as standards for kids from wealthy backgrounds, or should they make some allowances because inner-city kids come from disadvantaged backgrounds?



Source: Public Agenda, 1996

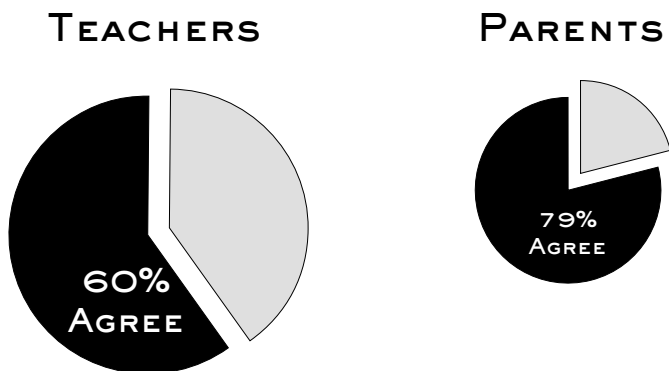
▶ TESTS WILL HOLD STUDENTS, SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS ACCOUNTABLE

By holding them accountable for results, high-stakes tests will force schools, students and teachers to work harder. Agree?



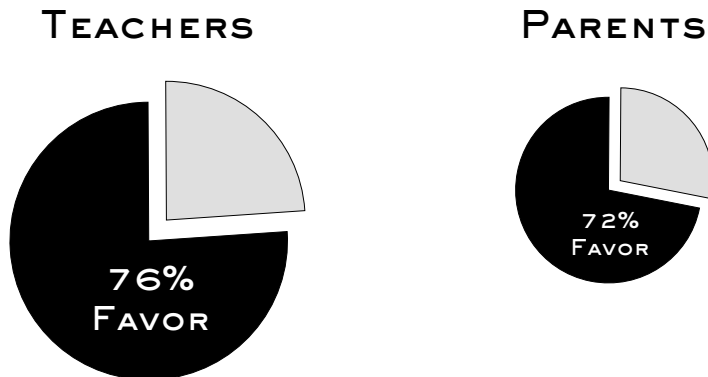
Source: Reality Check 2000, Public Agenda

Do you support the idea that students should pass a test to be promoted to the next grade? If they fail to pass, they go to summer school or repeat the grade.



Source: Reality Check 2000, Public Agenda

Would you favor stricter standards for social promotion in school even if it meant that significantly more students would be held back?



Source: Phi Delta Kappa Poll of Teacher Attitudes, 2000

▶ TESTS ARE REASONABLE

Percent of teachers who say their state and district tests are set at:

TOO LOW A LEVEL	12%
TOO HIGH A LEVEL	23%
THE RIGHT LEVEL	49%
OTHER	16%

Source: American Federation of Teachers survey, fall 1999

Percent of teachers saying that students are:

TESTED AT ABOUT THE RIGHT FREQUENCY	49%
TESTED TOO FREQUENTLY	39%
TESTED NOT FREQUENTLY ENOUGH	9%
NOT SURE	3%

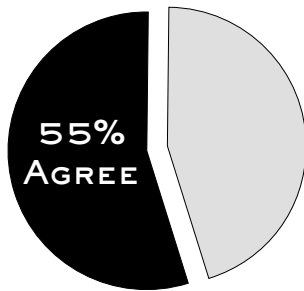
Source: American Federation of Teachers survey, fall 1999

▶ BUT TESTS ARE NARROWING THE CURRICULUM ...

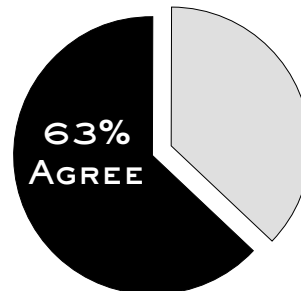
The focus on test results has resulted in a curriculum that is too narrow and omits important areas.

Too much time is spent on test preparation that cuts into other classroom teaching

TEACHERS



TEACHERS

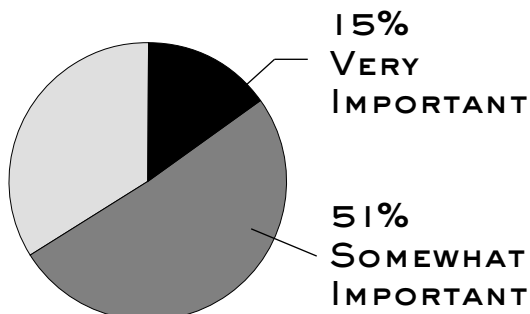


Source: American Federation of Teachers survey, fall 1999

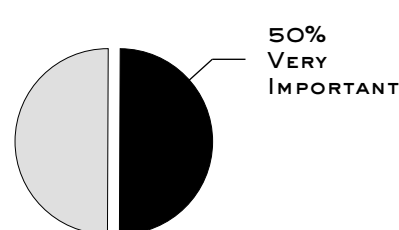
▶ AND ONLY 15 PERCENT SAY TEST SCORES ARE A VERY IMPORTANT INDICATOR

Percent saying standardized test scores are “very important” for measuring the effectiveness of the public schools in the community:

TEACHERS



PUBLIC



Source: Phi Delta Kappa Poll of Teacher Attitudes, 1999

► TEACHERS FAVOR WORK SAMPLES OVER TEST SCORES

Which provides the best picture of student progress?

	TEACHERS	PUBLIC
EXAMPLES OF WORK	60%	33%
LETTER GRADES	16%	23%
SCORES ON TESTS	13%	27%
WRITTEN OBSERVATIONS	11%	14%

Source: Phi Delta Kappa Poll of Teacher Attitudes, 2000

► ACADEMIC STANDARDS ARE NOT A HIGH PRIORITY

If there were one thing you could change to improve public schools in your community, what would that be?

	TEACHERS	PUBLIC
MORE PARENT INVOLVEMENT	18%	3%
MORE TEACHERS/SMALLER CLASS SIZE	12%	10%
FUNDING	8%	5%
DISCIPLINE/MORE CONTROL	6%	12%
HIGHER TEACHER PAY	5%	3%
MORE UPDATED BOOKS, EQUIPMENT	3%	2%
ACADEMIC STANDARDS	2%	3%

Source: Phi Delta Kappa Poll of Teacher Attitudes 2000

▶ STANDARDS HAVEN'T CHANGED TEACHERS' PRACTICE

Percent of teachers saying

THEY RECEIVE MOST GUIDANCE ABOUT WHAT TO TEACH FROM STATE STANDARDS	49%
SCHOOLS AUTOMATICALLY PROMOTE STUDENTS WHEN THEY REACH A MAXIMUM AGE	36%
THEY EXPECT MORE FROM STUDENTS BECAUSE OF THE GUIDELINES	44%
COLLEAGUES PASS STUDENTS AS LONG AS THEY TRY HARD AND ATTEND REGULARLY	48%

Source: Reality Check 2000, Public Agenda

▶ RESOURCES

- **American Federation of Teachers/Albert Shanker Institute:** www.aft.org, (202) 879-4400
- **American Viewpoint:** www.amview.com, (703) 684-3325
- **Business Roundtable:** www.brt.org, (202) 872-1260
- **Maryland Business Roundtable for Education:** www.mbrt.org, (410) 727-0448
- **Mass Insight Education Research:** www.massinsight.com, (617) 722-4160
- **Phi Delta Kappa:** www.pdkintl.org
- **Public Agenda:** www.publicagenda.org, (212) 686-6610
- **Recruiting New Teachers:** www.rnt.org/publications, (617) 489-6000
- **Shell Poll:** www.countonshell.com, (713) 241-5398
- **UCLA Survey:** www.gseis.ucla.edu/heri/heri.html, (310) 825-1925
- **Washington Partnership for Learning:** www.partnership-wa.org, (206) 625-9655



*1615 L Street, NW, Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20036
phone (202) 872-1260
fax (202) 466-3509
www.brt.org*